THE EXILED NEGROES IN CANADA.

Inquiry into their Condition.

ARE THEY IMPROVING, OR THE CONTRARY?

Statistics of Education, Health and Crime.

Report of The Tribune's Special Commissioner.

III.

THE COLONY AT BUXTON.

One of the most interesting places visited in the course of our inquiries was the colony at Buxton. About nine years ago, the Rev. William King, an Irish Presbyterian clergyman, residing at the time in Louisiana, and owning several slaves, servants of his family, and having through him, fifteen in all, to Canada, and there emancipated them. Not content with this, and desirous to try, on a sufficient scale, the question whether the emancipated negro would, as an agriculturist, be found self-supporting, and burning to improve the moral and social condition of the negro, Mr. King became the head and moving agent of an association, which obtained, on favorable terms, a large grant of lands, belonging originally to the clergy reserves. The land, forming a tract six miles long by three miles wide, was surveyed, cut through by avenues intersecting each other at right angles, and divided into plots of fifty acres each, each plot fronting upon one of the avenues. The expenses of surveying, added to the original price of the land, made its cost amount to $2 per acre. The ground was level, heavily timbered with oak, hickory, beech, elm, maple and basswood, and the virgin soil was a deep, rich, black loam. To this place the negroes were invited to try the grand experiment; each applicant was to receive a farm, not as a gratuity, but paying for it the full cost price in ten annual installments, with interest added. He bound himself at the same time, within a given period, to put up a house upon his land conforming to a prescribed model; he was to furnish his own farming tools and implements, and to support himself and family. Only when these conditions were complied with, and the lands paid for, was he to receive his deed. A school-house, teachers and tuition were furnished gratuitously; a Sabbath School was established; and a rude log church, in which Mr. King himself officiated, was erected, and was open to all who might choose to attend public worship in it. Such is an outline of the plan of the settlement of the Elgin Association at Buxton, and at the end of seven years from the date of its origin that settlement numbers two hundred families and about eight hundred souls!

Buxton is about thirteen miles south west from Chatham, and is about three miles distant from the shore of Lake Erie. Having procured a conveyance we set out to visit it, under the guidance of the son of a warm-hearted Irishman, whose Quaker education only gave point to the impulsive and genial spirit of his countrymen. For the first seven miles the road was admirable but was bordered for the most part, even in the immediate vicinity of the town, by the primeval forest, the land being held in large tracts by those who had bought it to hold for higher prices. As we turned off toward Buxton the road became worse, being a good deal broken into holes, which, in bad weather, must have been nearly impassable; on either side, however, there were well-improved farms. On the way we frequently met with blacks from the settlement, sometimes a large wagon full of men and women, with a good two-horse team, sometimes in a rickety affair drawn by a single horse, and once a black woman on horseback, with a boy of 11 or 12 years of age behind her. There was a quarterly meeting of the Methodists in session, and they were on the way to attend it. As we approached the settlement the neighborhood became more populous, and we saw frequent cabins, which we took to form part of it. Inquiring the way, we were shown a little church as a guide, and, driving by it, we found ourselves within the domain.

The house of Mr. King is a long log-house, with a high, steep roof and dormer windows, and a porch extending the whole length of the building; interiorly, it is divided by transverse partitions into a number of rooms which serve as office, sitting-room, dining-room, &c. Everything was perfectly plain, but neat and substantial. Not far from the house are the little mission church, already mentioned, the schoolhouse and post-office of the settlement, all built of unhewn logs, while at some little distance are a steam saw-mill, a brickyard, a pearl-ash factory, with blacksmith, carpenter and shoe shop, and the country store for the settlement. Fortunately we found the Rev. Mr. King at home and disengaged, a strongly-built, middle-sized and middle-aged man, of dark complexion, with a full square head and a homely countenance, indicative at once of kindness and sagacity. From him we learned that there were now at the settlement 200 families, each occupying their own house, and numbering in all about 800 souls. Of the land, 1,025 acres were cleared and under fence, beside 200 acres on which the trees had been felled and were ready for burning, and which would be under cultivation the ensuing Spring. Of the land already fenced, 354 acres were planted with corn, which already, at the time of my visit, was safe from the frost, and promised a more than average crop; 200 acres had been planted with wheat, 70 with oats, 80 with potatoes, and 120 with other crops, such as beans, peas, turnips and grass. There are owned by the settlers 200 cows, 80 oxen, 300 hogs, and 52 horses; there are likewise a few sheep, but they have not done well, and the experience of the community has not been favorable to sheep raising.

There are now two schools at Buxton, a male and female, the latter established within the past year for the purpose of teaching the girls plain sewing, as well as those that might wish it, the higher branches of female education. The number enrolled in both schools was, during the past year, 140, and the average attendance 58. Hitherto these schools have been gratuitous, but, in conformity with the original idea of making the whole establishment self supporting, a small payment will henceforth be required. A Sabbath School, kept open on every Sabbath during the year, is attended by 112 pupils, and the average attendance is 52.

Mr. King is a Director of the Elgin Association, and as such has a general superintendence over the temporal affairs of the Association: but his office is chiefly advisory, the colonists, so long as they conform to the rules of the Association in regard to their buildings and fences, being left to their own discretion. He is likewise a missionary of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, and in that capacity officiates in the Mission Church on the settlement. The negroes, for the greater part, belong to the Baptist and Methodist persuasions; and while Mr. K.'s personal influence has brought a full attendance to his own little church, many of the negroes maintain their former religious connections. About one quarter of the whole number do not attend church at all, and no compulsion is used. No intoxicating liquor is made or sold within the settlement; drunkenness is unknown there, and since its first formation but one person connected with it has been arrested for a violation of the laws. No case of bastardy has hitherto occurred; the general moral standard of the community is high, and the social improvement is marked and manifest.

The settlers are for the most part fugitive slaves, and of the whole number about one-third are of pure African descent. If Mr. King be right in this, the proportion of blacks is, I think, much greater than in the Province at large. Those of them who have been accustomed to farming and have had some capital to commence with, have done exceedingly well, having cleared more land and made greater improvements than the great majority of white settlers in the same time and under similar circumstances. Those who have brought neither skill nor capital have had a much more difficult task, but even these have so far either paid up their installments regularly, or when they have passed them, it has been by permission, the money being laid out upon the land, so as to render future payment easier. *Many have already paid in full for their farms and received their deeds*, others are prepared to do so in the coming year, and Mr. K. is confident that at the expiration of the ten years all will have come into full possession of their lands.

Two settlements of Europeans have been formed in Canada under Government direction, one of Highlanders at Notowassga, north of Toronto, another of mixed Irish, English and Scoth emigrants at Ramsey, near Brookville; the settlers of both for some time received aid in provisions, farming implements, &c., but both have failed. At the Highland settlement some 20 or 30 of the original settlers, with their families, still remain; the others have long been dispersed. They began to do better immediately the Government aid was discontinued. Mr. King attributes the greater success of the settlement at Buxton partly to the fact that, in the first place, the negroes are better ax-men than European emigrants, and so are better fitted to contend with the difficulties attendent upon clearing a heavily timbered country; but mainly to the circumstance that the colony at Buxton was, from the beginning, self supporting. The negroes perfectly understood that they were to depend upon themselves alone, that they were to receive no supplies in money, in food, or in clothing: and thus their pride and self-reliance being excited, they worked with a will, not otherwise to have been looked for. If, on the whole, this has been wise and has worked well in one respect, it may have retarded the progress of the settlement, or, at least, have diminished the result as seen in it; since many of the negroes have found it more profitable, perhaps necessary, to employ part of their time and labor at a distance from Buxton. Now, however, the completion of the saw-mill, the brick-yard and the potash factory affords a field for labor on the place itself.

Of the fifteen slaves Mr. King originally brought with him, three have died, though their places have been taken by children that have since been born in Canada; nine are with him still settled at Buxton; one is married and lives at Chatham; two, a mother and daughter, are at Detroit, but Mr. King has lately received a letter from the daughter, stating that they are about to return to Buxton. One of the slaves, at that time an old man of 65, received, in consideration of his age, some assistance in putting up his cabin, and we believe in clearing his land. He married at Buxton a woman of suitable years, and has ever since supported her and himself without assistance. I saw his house, his garden, and his corn patch, and everything looked neat and flourishing.

In company with Mr. K. and our companion from Chatham, we walked over a part of the settlement. The place was certainly no realization of a Utopia, nor did the cabins resemble the neat, white-painted houses of a New-England village. Everything was new, rude and rough. To a city-bred man the timber was terrible. I saw one tree left standing by the roadside, at least five feet through at the base, and rising straight as an arrow and scarcely diminished in circumference to an immense hight, before it gave off a branch. Most of them were from two to four feet in diameter. The road was merely a wide lane cut straight through the forest, with the roots of the trees everywhere traversing the deep, friable soil. On either side, here and there, were scattered the cabins and clearings of the settlers—the former all built of unhewn logs, set back the prescribed number of feet from the road, and each one surrounded by its kitchen-garden. They were not destitute of all traces of ornament. Over the rude porch in front of the cabin creepers were frequently trained and one, covered with a hop-vine in full bearing, looked exceedingly pretty. Some of the gardens boasted flower-beds, and bright-colored phloxes and poppies and corn-flowers were in contrast with the dark forest which hemmed us in. We entered the cabin of a fugitive, but two years from Kentucky, and who had married, we believe, some time after he had reached the settlement. The cabin was smaller than the model; but the owner, with an eye at a future time of adding to it, had built the chimney double, and a huge brick fire-place stared at us from the outside. Within was the wife, with a couple of small children, her relations, to whom the couple afforded a home. There were chairs, a table, a large chest, and a cooking-stove and its utensils. The family dinner was still on the stove, pork and potatoes, while into another vessel, in a quantity of hot, bubbling fat, had been thrown some green corn in the ear. The man was absent at work in the brick-yard.

Another cabin we entered belonged to a man—a full black—who, fourteen years before, had escaped from Missouri. He had been six years at the settlement, and had twenty-four acres of land fenced and under cultivation, and six more on which the wood had been felled. He had paid up four of his installments, and owned a wagon, a yoke of oxen, a mare and two colts. He had four or five children, and his eldest boy, fourteen years old, was reading Virgil!—for him, I fear, unprofitable reading. The day was warm, and the smaller children, like the rest of those we saw, were dressed for warm weather: their legs, feet and arms were bare, and their garments had apertures about them which had not been bestowed by the tailor or dressmaker. In the house, beside the ordinary bed and bedding, chairs, table, &c., we found a rocking chair, and a large new safe—a recent importation from Yankee land. On asking for a glass of water, it was brought in a clean tumbler and upon a plate.

Another cabin, belonging to an old settler, was more ambitious. It was larger, with a vine-covered porch; had a hall in the center, and a room on either side; about the walls were hung sundry staring prints, and a carpet, sofa and a large cooking stove were added to the usual articles of furniture. One feature of all the cabins we must not forget—the huge brick fire-place, occupying the best part of one side of the room, and which, with its chimney, bore tokens of the roaring fires which blazed in it during the Winter.

We saw only a small, and, as we were informed, the newest and least advanced part of the settlement, but our stay in Canada was limited, and despite the hospitable invitation of Mr. King to remain a few days with him, we felt ourselves compelled to hasten home. We left Buxton with the belief that we had seen one of those rare men who, by a single minded devotion to one worthy object, not only accomplish great ends but ennoble our common humanity.

Bayard Taylor in Northern Europe.

No. XXXVI.

A TRIP TO THE VORING-FOSS.

Correspondence of The N. Y. Tribune.

VOSSEVANGEN, Norway, Aug. 20, 1857.

After waiting only five hours, we obtained three horses and drove away from Bergen. It was a superb afternoon, spotlessly blue overhead, with still, blue water below, and hills of dark, velvety verdure throbbing and sparkling in the sunshine and the breezes from off the fiord. We sped past the long line of suburban gardens, through the linden avenues, which somehow or other suggested to me the days of the Hanseatic League, past Tivoli, the Hoboken of Bergen, and, on the summit of the hill beyond, stopped to take a parting look at the beautiful city. She sat at the foot of her guardian mountain, across the lake, her white towers and red roofs lying in sharp relief against the purple background of the islands which protect her from the sea. In color, form and atmospheric effect, the picture was perfect. Norway is particularly fortunate in the position and surroundings of her three chief cities. Bergen bears away the palm, truly; but either of them has few rivals in Europe.

Our road led, at first, over well-cultivated hills, dotted with comfortable farm-houses—a rolling, broken country, inclosed by rugged and sterile groups of hills. After some miles, we turned northward into a narrow valley, running parallel to the coast line. The afternoon sun, shining over the shoulder of the mountain on our left, illuminated, with dazzling effect, the green pastures in the bosom of the valley, and the groves of twinkling birch and somber fir on the opposite slopes. I have never seen purer tints in the sunshine—never a softer transparency in the shadows. The landscape was ideal in its beauty, except the houses, whose squalor and discomfort were real. Our first station lay off the road, on a hill. A very friendly old man promised to get us horses as soon as possible, and his wife set before us the best fare the house afforded—milk, oaten shingles, and bad cheese. The house was dirty, and the aspect of the family bed, which occupied one side of the room, merely divided by boards into separate compartments for the parents, children and servants, was sufficient to banish sleep. Notwithstanding the poverty of the place, the old woman set a good value upon her choice provender. The horses were soon forthcoming, and the man, whose apparent kindness increased every moment, said to me: "Have I not done well? Is it not very well that I "have brought your horses so soon?" I assented cheerfully, but he still repeated the same questions, and I was stupid enough not to discover their meaning, until he added: "I have done everything so "well that you ought to give me something for it." The naïve manner of this request made it seem reasonable, and I gave him something accordingly, though a little disappointed, for I had congratulated myself on finding at last a friendly and obliging *skios-skaffer* (postmaster) in Norway.

Toward evening we reached a little village on the shore of the Osterfiord. Here the road terminated, and a water station of eighteen miles in length lay before us. The fiords on the western coast of Norway are narrow, shut in by lofty and abrupt mountains, and penetrate far into the land—frequently to the distance of a hundred miles. The general direction of the valleys is parallel to the line of the coast, intersecting the fiords at nearly a right angle, so that they, in connection with these watery defiles, divide the mountains into immense irregular blocks, with very precipitous sides, and a summit table-land varying from two to four thousand feet above the sea level. For this reason, there is no continuous road in all western Norway, but alternate links of land and water—boats and post-horses. The deepest fiords reach very nearly to the spinal ridge of the mountain region, and a land road from Bergen to this line would be more difficult to construct than any of the great highways across the Alps. In proportion to her population and means, Norway has done more for roads than any country in the world. Not only her main thoroughfares, but even her by ways, give evidence of astonishing skill, industry and perseverance. The Storthing has recently appropriated a sum of $188,000 for the improvement of roads, in addition to the repairs which the farmers are obliged to make, and which constitute almost their only tax, as there is no assessment whatever upon landed property. There seems a singular incongruity, however, in finding such an evidence of the highest civilization in connection with the semi-barbaric condition of the people. Generally, the improvement of the means of communication in a country is in the ratio of its social progress.

As we were obliged to wait until morning before commencing our voyage, we set about procuring supper and lodging. Some dirty beds in a dirty upper room constituted the latter, but the former was a doubtful affair. The landlord, who persisted in calling me "Dock," made a foraging excursion among the houses, and, after some time, laid before us a salted and smoked leg of mutton, some rancid butter, hard oaten bread and pestilential cheese. I ate as a matter of duty toward my body, but my companions were less conscientious. We deserve no credit for having risen early the next morning, neither was there any self denial in the fact of our being content with a single cup of coffee. The boatmen, five in number, who had been engaged the evening before, took our carioles apart and stowed them in the stern, while we three disposed ourselves very uneasily in the narrow bow. As we were about pushing off, one of the men stepped upon a stone and shouted in a loud voice: "Come and help us, fairies!"—wherest the others laughed heartily. The wind was against us, but I thought the men hugged the shore much more than was necessary. I have noticed the same thing since, and spoken of it, but they say there are strong currents in these fiords, setting toward the sea. The water, in fact, is but slightly brackish, and the ebb and flow of the tides is hardly felt.

The scenery on the Osterfiord is superb. Mountains, two thousand feet high, incline and twist it between their interlocking bases. Cliffs of naked rock overhang it, and cataracts fall into it in long, zigzag chains of foam. Here and there, a little embayed dell rejoices with settlement and cultivation, and even on the wildest steeps, where it almost seems impossible for the human foot to find hold, the people scramble, at the hazard of their lives, to reap a scanty harvest of grass for the Winter. Goats pasture everywhere, and our boatmen took delight in making the ewes follow us along the cliffs, by imitating the bleating of kids. Toward noon, we left the main body of the fiord, and entered a narrow arm, which lay in eternal shadow under tremendous walls of dark rock. The light and heat of noonday were tropical in their silent intensity, painting the summits far above with dashes of fierce color, while the bases sank in blue gloom to meet the green darkness of the water. Again and again the hights inclosed us so that there was no outlet; but they opened again, as if purposely to make way for us, until our keel grated the pebbly barrier of a narrow valley, where the road commenced again. Four miles through this gap brought us to another branch of the same fiord, where we were obliged to have our carioles taken to pieces and shipped for a short voyage.

At its extremity, the fiord narrowed, and still loftier mountains overhung it. Shut in by these, like some palmy dell in the heart of the porphyry mountains of the Sahara, lay Bolstadören, a miracle of greenness and beauty. A mantle of emerald velvet, falling in the softest slopes and swells to the water's edge, was thrown upon the valley; the barley had been cut and bound to long upright poles to dry, rising like golden pillars from the shaven stubble; and, to crown all, above the landing-place stood a two-story house, with a jolly fat landlord smoking in the shade, and half a dozen pleasant-looking women gossiping in-doors. "Can "we get anything to eat?" was the first question. "The gentlemen can have fresh salmon and pota-"toes, and red wine, if they wish it," answered the mistress. Of course we wished it; we wished for any food clean enough to be eatable, and the promise of such fare was like the falling of manna in the desert. The salmon, fresh from the stream, was particularly fine; the fish is here so abundant that the landlord had caught 962, as he informed us, in the course of one season.

We had but two miles of land before another sheet of water intervened and our carioles were again taken to pieces. The postillions and boatmen along this route were great scamps, frequently asking more than the legal fare, and in one instance threatening to prevent us from going on, unless we paid it. I shall not bore you with accounts of our various little squabbles on the road, all of which tended more and more to convince us that, unless the Norwegians were a great deal more friendly, kind and honest a few years ago than they are now, they have been more over-praised than any people in the world. I must say, however, that they are bungling swindlers, and could only be successful with the greenest of travelers. The moment an imposition is resisted, and the stranger shows himself familiar with the true charges and methods of travel, they give up the attempt; but the desire to cheat is only less annoying to one than cheating itself. The fees for traveling by *skyds* are, it is true, disproportionately low, and in many instances the obligation to furnish horses is no doubt an actual loss to the farmer. Very often, we would have willingly paid a small increase upon the legal rates, if it had been asked for as a favor; but, when it was boldly demanded as a right and backed by a falsehood, we went not a stiver beyond the letter of the law.

Landing at Evanger, an intelligent landlord, who had four brothers in America, gave us return horses to Vossevangen, and we enjoyed the long twilight of the warm Summer evening while driving along the hills which overlook the valley connecting the lakes of Vossevangen and Evanger. It was a lovely landscape, ripe with harvest, and the air full of mellow, balmy odors from the flowers and grain. The black spire of Vossevangen Church, standing back against the dawning moonlight, was the welcome termination of our long day's journey, and not less welcome were our clean and comfortable quarters in the house of a merchant there. Here we left the main road across Norway, in order to make an excursion to the Vöring-Foss, which lies beyond the Hardanger Fiord, about fifty miles distant, in a south-eastern direction.

Vossevangen, in the splendor of a cloudless morning, was even more beautiful than as a moonlit haven of repose. The compact little village lay half buried in trees, clustered about the massive old church, with its black, pointed tower, and roof covered with pitched shingles, in the center of the valley, while the mountains around shone bald and bright through floating veils of vapor which had risen from the lake. The people were all at work in the fields betimes, cutting and stacking the barley. The grass-fields, cut smooth and close, and of the softest and evenest green, seemed left for show rather than for use. The bottom of the valley along which we drove was filled with an unbroken pine forest, inclosing here and there a lake,

"Where heaven itself, brought down to earth,
Seemed fairer than above,"

while the opposite mountain rose rich with harvest-fields and farm-houses. There are similar landscapes between Fribourg and Vevay, in Switzerland—finer, perhaps, except that all cultivated scenery in Norway gains wonderfully in effect from the savage environment of the barren fjelds. Here, cultivation is somewhat of a phenomenon, and a rich, thickly-settled valley strikes one with a certain surprise. The Norwegians have been accused of neglecting agriculture, but I do not see that much more could be expected of them. The subjugation of virgin soil, as we have had occasion to notice, is a serious work. At the best, the grain harvests are uncertain, while fish are almost as sure as the season; and so the surplus agricultural population either emigrates, or removes to the fishing grounds on the coast. There is undoubtedly a considerable quantity of wild land which could be made arable; but the same means, applied to the improvement of that which is at present under cultivation, would accomplish far more beneficent results.

Leaving the valley, we drove for some time through pine forests, and here, as elsewhere, had occasion to notice the manner in which this source of wealth has been drained of late years. The trees were very straight and beautiful, but there were none of more than middle age. All the fine old timber had been cut away; all Norway, in fact, has been despoiled in like manner, and the people are but just awaking to the fact that they are killing a goose which lays golden eggs. The Government so prudently economical that it only allows $100,000 worth of silver to be quarried annually in the mines of Kongsberg, lest the supply should be exhausted, has, I believe, adopted measures for the preservation of the forests, but I am not able to state their precise character. Except in valleys remote from the rivers and fiords, one now finds very little mature timber.

"The tallest pine,
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great admiral,"

I have not yet seen.

We at last came upon a little lake in a close glen, with walls a thousand feet high. Not suspecting that we had ascended much above the sea-level, we were surprised to see the gorge all at once open below us, revealing a dark-blue lake, far down among the mountains. We stood on the brink of a wall, over which the stream at our side fell in a "baak" of divided cataracts. Our road was engineered with great difficulty to the bottom of the steep, whence a gentler descent took us to the hamlet of Vasenden, at the head of the lake. Beyond this, there was no road for carioles, and we accordingly gave ours in charge of a bright, active and intelligent little post-master, twelve years old. He and his mother then rowed us across the lake to the village of Graven, whence there was a bridle-road across the mountains to a branch of the Hardanger Fiord. They demanded only twelve skillings (ten cents) for the row of three miles, and then posted off to a neighboring farm-house to engage horses for us.

There was a neat white dwelling on the hill which we took to be the parsonage, but which proved to be the residence of an army captain on leave, whom we found sitting in the door cleaning his gun, as we approached. He courteously ushered us into the house, and made his appearance soon afterward in a clean shirt, followed by his wife, with wine and cakes upon a tray. I found him to be a man of more than ordinary intelligence, and of an earnest and reflective turn of mind, rare in men of his profession. He spoke chiefly of the passion for emigration which now possesses the Norwegian farmers, considering it not rendered necessary by their actual condition, but rather one of those contagions which spread through communities and nations, overcoming alike prudence and prejudice. He deplored it as retarding the development of Norway. Personal interest, however, is stronger than patriotism, everywhere, and I see no signs of the emigration decreasing for some years to come.

After waiting a considerable time, we obtained two horses and a strapping farmer's son for guide. The fellow was delighted to find out where we came from, and was continually shouting to the people in the fields: "Here, these are Americans; they were born there!"—whereat the people stared, saluted, and then stared again. He shouldered our packs and marched beside the horses, with the greatest ease. "You are strong," I remarked. "Yes," he replied, "I am a strong Norrmand," making his patriotism an excuse for his personal pride. We had a terribly tough pull up the mountain, through pine woods, to the summit level of the fjeld. The view backward, over the lake, was enchanting, and we lingered long on the steep, loth to lose it. Turning again, a desolate lake lay before us, heathery swells of the bleak table-land and distant peaks, touched with snow. Once upon the broad, level summit of a Norwegian fjeld, one would never guess what lovely valleys lie under those misty breaks which separate its immense lobes—what gashes of life and beauty penetrate its stony heart. There are, in fact, two Norways: one above—a series of detached, irregular masses, bleak, snowy, wind-swept and heather-grown, inhabited by herdsmen and hunters; and one below—a ramification of narrow veins of land and water, with fields and forests, highways and villages.

So, when we had traversed the upper land for several miles, we came to a brink overlooking another branch of the lower land, and descended through thick woods to the farms of Ulvik, on the Eyfiord, an arm of the Hardanger. The shores were gloriously beautiful; slopes of dazzling turf inclosed the bright blue water, and clumps of oak, ash and linden, in park-like groups, studded the fields. Low, red farm-houses, each with its hollow square of stables and granaries, dotted the hill-sides, and the people, male and female, were everywhere out reaping the ripe barley and piling it, pillar-wise, upon tall stakes. Owing to this circumstance, we were obliged to wait some time for oarsmen. There was no milk to be had, nor indeed anything to eat, notwithstanding the signs of plenty on all sides. My friend, wandering from house to house, at last discovered an old man who brought him a bowl of mead in exchange for a cigar. Late in the afternoon, two men came, put us into a shabby and leaky boat, and pulled away slowly for Vik, ten miles distant.

The fiord was shut in by lofty and abrupt mountains, often interrupted by deep lateral gorges. This is the general character of the Hardanger Fiord, a broad, winding sheet of water, with many arms, but whose extent is diminished to the eye by the grandeur of its shores. Nothing can be wilder or more desolate than this scenery, especially at the junction of the two branches, where all signs of habitation are shut out of sight, and one is surrounded by mighty precipices of dark-red rock, vanishing away to the eastward in a gloomy defile. It was three hours and a half before we reached Vik, at the head of a bay on the southern side. Here, however, some English fishermen were quartered, and we made sure of a supper. The landlord, of course, received their superfluous salmon, and they were not the men to spare a potato-field, so both were forthcoming, and, in the satisfaction of appeased hunger, we were willing to indorse the opinion of a former English traveler in the guests' book: "This place seems to me a paradise, although very probably it is not one." The luxury of fishing, which I never could understand, has taught the Norwegians to regard travelers as their proper prey. Why should a man, they think, pay £50 for the privilege of catching fish, which he gives away as soon as caught, unless he don't know how else to get rid of his money? Were it not that fishing in Norway includes pure air, hard fare and healthy exercise, I should agree with somebody's definition of Angling—"A rod with a fly at one end and a fool at the other"—but it is all that, and besides furnished us with a good meal more than once; wherefore I respect it.

We were now but eight miles from the Vöring Foss, and set out betimes the next morning, taking with us a bottle of red wine, some dry bread, and Peder Halstensen as guide. I mention Peder particularly, because he is the only jolly, lively, wide-awake, open-hearted Norwegian I have ever seen. As rollicking as a Neapolitan, as chatty as an Andalusian, and as frank as a Tyrolese, he formed a remarkable contrast to the men with whom we had hitherto come in contact. He had long black hair, wicked black eyes, and a mouth which laughed even when his face was at rest. Add a capital tenor voice, a lithe, active frame, and something irresistibly odd and droll in his motions, and you have his principal points. We walked across the birch-wooded isthmus behind Vik to the Eyfjordsvand, a lake about three miles long, which completely cuts off the further valley, the mountains on either side failing to it in sheer precipices a thousand feet high.

We embarked in a crazy, leaky boat, Peder pulling vigorously, and singing "*Frie dig ved lifvet*" (Life let us cherish"), with all the contentment on his face which is expressed in Mozart's immortal melody. "Peder," said I, "do you know the national song of Norway?" "I should think so," was his answer, stopping short in the midst of a wild Fjeld-song, clearing his throat, and singing with a fervor and enthusiasm which rang wide over the lonely lake:

"Minstrel, awaken the harp from its slumbers,
Strike for Old Norway, the land of the free!
High and heroic, in soul-stirring numbers,
Chime of our fathers! we strike it for thee.
Old recollections awake our affections—
Hallow the name of the land of our birth;
Each heart beats its loudest, each cheek glows its proudest,
For Norway the ancient, the throne of the earth."*

"Dost thou know," said he, becoming more familiar in his address, "that a lawyer by the name of Bjerragaard wrote this song, and the Storthing at Christiania gave him a hundred specie dollars for it? That was not too much, was it?" "No," said I, "five hundred dollars would be little enough for such a song." "Yes, yes; that is what I would," was his earnest assent; and as I happened at that moment to ask whether we could see the peaks of the Halling Jökelen, he commenced a saeter-song of life on the lofty fjeld—a song of snow, and free winds, and blue sky. By this time we had reached the other end of the lake, where in the midst of a little valley of rich alluvial soil, covered with patches of barley and potatoes, stood the hamlet of Sæbö. Here Peder procured a horse for my friend, and we entered the mouth of a sublime gorge which opened to the eastward—a mere split in the mighty ramparts of Hardanger-fjeld. Peder was continually shouting to the people in the fields: "Look here! these are Americans—these two—and the other one is a German! This one talks Norsk, and the others don't."

We ascended the defile by a rough foot path, at first through alder thickets, but afterward over immense masses of rocky ruin which had tumbled from the crags far above, and almost blocked up the valley. In silence, desolation and awful grandeur, this defile equals any of the Alpine passes. In the Spring, when the rocks, split by wedges of ice, disengage themselves from the summit and thunder down upon the piled wrecks of ages, it must be terribly sublime. A bridge, consisting of two logs spanned across abutments of loose stones, and vibrating strongly under our tread, took us over the torrent. Our road, for some distance, was now a mere staircase, scrambling up, down, under, over and between the chaos of sundered rocks. A little further, and the defile shut in altogether, forming a *cul de sac* of apparently perpendicular walls from two to three thousand feet high. "How are we to get out of this?" I asked Peder. "Yonder," said he, pointing to the inaccessible summit in front. "But where does the stream come from?" "That you will soon see." Lo! all at once a clean split from top to bottom disclosed itself in the wall on our left, and in passing its mouth we had a glimpse up the monstrous chasm, whose dark blue sides, falling sheer three thousand feet, vanished at the bottom in eternal gloom and spray.

Crossing the stream again, we commenced ascending over the debris of stony avalanches, the path becoming steeper and steeper, until the far-off summit almost hung over our heads. It was now a zigzag ladder, roughly thrown together, but very firm. The red mare which my friend rode climbed it like a cat, never hesitating, even at an angle of 50°, and never making a false step. The performance of this noble animal was almost incredible. I should never have believed a horse capable of such gymnastics had I not seen it with my own eyes, had I not mounted her myself at the most difficult points, in order to test her powers. You, who have climbed the *Magenwand*, in going from the Glacier of the Rhone to the Grimsel, imagine a slant higher, steeper, and composed of loose rocks, and you will have an exact picture of our ascent. We climbed well, and yet it took us just an hour and a half to reach the summit.

We were now on the great plateau of the Hardanger Fjeld, 2,500 feet above the sea. A wild region lay before us—great swells, covered with heather, sweeping into the distance and given up to solitude and silence. A few isolated peaks, streaked with snow, rose from this upper level, and a deep break on our left revealed the top of the chasm through which the torrent made its way. At its extremity, a mile or more distant, rose a light cloud of vapor, seeming close at hand in the thin mountain air. The thick, spongy soil, not more than two feet deep, rests on a solid bed of rock—the entire Hardanger Fjeld, in fact, is but a single rock—and is, therefore, always swampy. Whortleberries were abundant, as well as the multeberry (*Rubus chamæmorus*), which I have found growing in Newfoundland, and Peder, running off on the hunt of them, was continually leading us astray. But at last we approached the wreath of whirling spray, and heard the hollow roar of the Vöring Foss. The great chasm yawned before us: another step, and we stood on the brink. I seized the branch of a tough pine sapling as a support and leaned over. My head did not swim: the hight was too great for that the impression too grand and wonderful. The shelf of rock on which I stood projected far out over a gulf twelve hundred feet deep, whose opposite side rose in one grand escarpment from the bottom to a hight of eight hundred feet above my head. On this black wall, wet with eternal spray, was painted a splendid rainbow, forming two thirds of a circle before it melted into the gloom below. A little stream fell in one long thread of silver from the very summit, like a plumb-line dropped to measure the two thousand feet. On my right hand, the stream, coming down from the level of the Fjeld in a torn, twisted and boiling mass, reached the brink of the gulf at a point about four hundred feet below me, whence it fell in a single sheet to the bottom, a depth of between eight and nine hundred feet.

Could one view it from below, this fall would present one of the grandest spectacles in the world. In hight, volume of water and sublime surroundings, it has no equal. The spectator, however, looks down upon it from a great hight above its brink, whence it is so foreshortened that he can only guess its majesty and beauty. By lying upon your belly and thrusting your head out beyond the roots of the pines, you can safely peer into the dread abyss, and watch, through the vortex of whirling spray in its tortured womb, the starry coruscations which radiate from the bottom of the fall like rockets of water incessantly exploding. But this view, sublime as it is, only whets your desire to stand below and see the river, with its sprayey crest shining against the sky, make but one leap from heaven to hell. Some persons have succeeded, by entering the chasm at its mouth in the valley below, in getting far enough to see a portion of the fall, the remainder being concealed by a projecting rock; and the time will come, no doubt, when somebody will have energy enough to carry a

* Latham's translation.